

Fiscal Year 2005

United States Department of Agriculture



Vermont

Conservation Security Program: A New Approach

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The Conservation Security Program (CSP) is a voluntary conservation program that supports ongoing stewardship of private agricultural lands by providing payments for maintaining and enhancing natural resources. NRCS identifies and rewards those farmers who are meeting the highest standards of conservation and environmental management on their operations. CSP rewards the best and motivates the rest, building a foundation of natural resource conservation that will provide benefits to the public for generations to come.

Use our online "energy estimator" tools to make energy-efficient conservation practice decisions.

See Page 3



Vermont CSP Quick Facts for 2005:

Watersheds: 2

CSP Participation:

Sought info on CSP: 27

Attended workshops: 38

Applied: 12

Enrolled: 11

Typical Enhancements:

Reduced soil tillage intensity

Use of legumes and manures to reduce commercial fertilizer applications

Lower soil conditioning index. Apply manure only to fields that have a soil test showing an optimum or less level of phosphorus

Use only low risk pesticides

Soil and plant micro-nutrient testing

Conservation fertilizer application methods

We all can make a difference....



The Importance of Conservation

..to the environment and to farming in Vermont was not lost on the Readnours of North Clarendon. Jon works as an environmental attorney; Cynthia is a naturalist.

"We were worried about soil erosion and water quality and wanted to keep the land in farming and help wildlife habitat."

They enrolled about four acres of their farmland in the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). A conservation plan was developed by the Natural Resources Conservation Service. The Rutland Natural Resources Conservation District coordinated the hand planting of over 1500 native species of tree seedlings and shrubs along nearly a mile of the Otter Creek by students from Stafford High School. The Readnour's cropland is being converted from corn to hay to help save the soil and a grass filter strip is underway. Wild turkeys have since returned and a Baltimore oriole has been spotted. Rare fresh water mussels present in the project area are now protected by filter strips and riparian forest buffers that reduce stream sedimentation. As a CREP project, The VT Agency of Agriculture administered the contract and provided incentive payments. The Farm Service Agency administered a Conservation Reserve Program contract which enhanced the project through cost shared tree plantings and the installation of a filter strip.

Cooperative Conservation

Landowners along the Mad River have set the example for cropland protection and stream bank stabilization. Eight farmers, working with NRCS under the Winooski District's Buffer Initiative, installed 49 acres of grass filter strips; planted 3/4 acre of forested riparian buffer; enhanced over 6 acres of existing riparian buffer, and stabilized 1,743 feet of stream bank. Over 5.5 miles of riparian corridor were improved or protected and 50 acres of cropland converted to vegetated buffers. These practices will be maintained for the next 10 to 15 years.

To further water quality,



Abbey Willard, White River NRCD and Ellen Sivret, NRCS, provide on-site assistance to a local farmer in the watershed.

these same farmers fall seeded winter rye to keep the soil from eroding and to capture residual crop nutrients. Reimbursement of \$28/acre came from EPA's - 319- funds. In the first year, 218 acres were cover cropped, increas-

ing dramatically to 391 acres. The second year. Encouraged by this success where every field adjacent to the Mad River is now fall cover cropped, the District and NRCS will collaborate on a similar project for the Winooski River.

Partnerships expand the reach and depth of conservation on the land.

Individually, federal, state, and nonprofit groups that comprise our conservation partnerships have a diversity of expertise in discipline, location, and focus. As partners in conservation, these groups share their unique areas of expertise and conservation work to put more conservation on the land.

Wildlife Need Wild Spaces



Over 4,600 feet of riparian area along the Second Branch of the White River in Randolph was enhanced in 1995 under a Wildlife Habitat Restoration Agreement among land owner Ruth Shumway, the White River Dis-

trict and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. At the time, cattle were fenced out of the stream and a bridge constructed to allow for the natural regeneration of woody species. However, preventing cattle access to the

stream was not enough to stop the stream from meandering, and subsequent flooding created unstable reaches that threatened cattle access to grazing paddocks. The approach to the bridge was stabilized through the Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program and the Partners for Wildlife Program. A water line was protected through NRCS's Environmental Quality Incentive Program. In 2005, an application to stabilize 300 feet of stream bank was accepted under NRCS' Agricultural Management Assistance program. The District, working with the White River Partnership, a

local citizen group, established forested riparian buffers along the Middle Branch of the White River. Trees were planted on this property under the Partnership's Trees for Streams project. A 35 foot forested riparian buffer, consisting of trees native to the White River Valley natural community was planted on 2,630 feet of the property. The trees, including 10 year old Black Walnut seedlings grown by Shumway, were planted by staff of the White River Partnership.

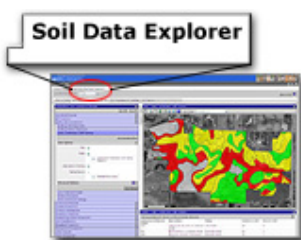
Transferring Technology



NRCS developed an online [Energy Estimator](http://ecat.sc.egov.usda.gov/) to help farmers determine how much they can save by switching from conventional tillage to a reduced tillage system. With this simple tool, farmers just plug in their zip code, their crops and acreage and the price they expect to pay for fuel. Now we are expanding that tool with a nitrogen component.

Farmers can calculate how much money they could save by switching from fossil fuel fertilizer to manure.

Online at
<http://ecat.sc.egov.usda.gov/>



[Soil survey](http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/the_world) maps and data are just a mouse click away. Soil survey information and maps are available to download in the privacy of your home. This is an other step away from the paper world and into the E-world. This site provides access to the largest natural resource information system in the world.

Go to:

http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/the_world

Resources at your fingertips.....



[Technical guides](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/efotg/) are the primary scientific references for NRCS and are now available on the web. These localized guides contain information about the conservation of soil, water, air, and related plant and animal resources and apply specifically to the geographic area for which they are prepared.

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/efotg/>



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Helping People Help the Land

Contact an NRCS Field Office in Your County

Addison County

68 Catamount Park, Middlebury
802 388-6748

Bennington County

310 Main St. P.O. Box 505, Bennington
802 442-2275

Caledonia & Essex Counties

481 Summer St. St. Johnsbury
802 748-2641

Chittenden County

1193 South Brownell Rd. Williston
802 865-7895

Orange & Washington Counties

617 Comstock Rd., Berlin
802 828-4493

Franklin & Grand Isle Counties

27 Fisher Pond Rd., St. Albans
802 527-1296

Lamoille County

109 Professional Drive, Morrisville
802 888-4935

Orleans County

59 Waterfront Plaza, Newport
802 334-6090

Rutland County

170 South Main St., Rutland
802 775-8034

Windham County

28 Vernon St., Brattleboro
802 254-9766

Windsor County

28 Farmvu Drive, White River Jct.
802 295-7942



Beginning Farmer Improves Farmstead

When Richard O'Connell, an aspiring new farmer, bought the farm in Corinth, he got more than just the barn, land and out buildings; he inherited a huge pile of manure, stacked adjacent to the barn and about 100 feet from a stream. As a dairy man milking thirty cattle, he continued to add to the pile. And then a major rain storm hit. The manure pile started its descent to the stream. Having removed manure in the past with a shovel and wheelbarrow, and with no hired help available, he saw that the daunting task before him was too great. That's when he called NRCS. As a beginning



farmer, O'Connell was eligible for NRCS to cost share up to 90% of a manure storage facility under the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). During construction last summer, while the manure facility was being built, he also completely redid one end of the barn and now has a new tie stall barn complete with a gutter cleaner. Roof runoff that had previously flowed across the barnyard creat-

ing a mess was channeled away from the barnyard. Runoff from the barn yard along with waste water from the milk house now enters the new storage facility. Today, the barn yard looks clean, manure no longer enters the stream, and Richard O'Connell's operation is considerably less labor intensive, allowing him to pursue other conservation measures on his farm.